

IS THE BIBLE REALLY THE WORD OF GOD?*

By Jeff Swart

II Timothy 3:15-17: *"And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*

Is the Bible **REALLY** the word of God? How do we know that God has spoken to man through the Bible? How do we know that the Bible is **REALLY** true? What makes the Bible more authoritative than the Qur'an, the Bhagavad-Gita, or the Book of Mormon?

For our message, I want to share several reasons why I believe the Bible is the word of God:

- I. REASON DEMANDS IT
- II. HISTORY VERIFIES IT
- III. SCIENCE AND ARCHAEOLOGY SUPPORT IT
- IV. PROPHECY PROVES IT
- V. CHRIST CONFIRMED IT
- VI. THE BIBLE CLAIMS IT

IS THE BIBLE REALLY THE WORD OF GOD?

I. REASON DEMANDS IT

As we contemplate the Bible, we are logically limited to two alternatives. Either the Bible is the word of God or it is not the word of God and is merely a fraudulent piece of literature. There are no other alternatives. I submit to you that it is logical and reasonable to believe that the Bible is God's divine revelation to man for the following reasons:

- ◆ **Because the Bible answers life's most important questions**

In the age of science and technology in which we live, modern man has never discovered the answer to the ultimate questions regarding existence, truth, meaning, and destiny in a test tube. "Why am I here?" "Where did I come from?" and, "Where am I going?" are the questions of the ages. R.C. Sproul insists:

The world's best geographer cannot show us the way to God, and the world's best psychiatrist cannot give us a final answer to the problem of our guilt. There are matters contained in Holy Writ that "unveil" for us that which is not exposed to the natural course of human investigation.

The answer to life's greatest questions is found in the same place that these answers have always been found—in the Bible. Only an infinite and all-knowing God can answer life's greatest questions. Without divine revelation, man's search for truth is a hopeless quest. Steve Kumar correctly observes:

Without a message from God, man's life is a fathomless riddle, man's existence a dark mystery, and death a wicked joke...without a divine revelation one can never understand the lessons of the past, the meaning of the present, and the direction for the future.

The simple truth is that it takes an infinite being to provide infinite truth. It takes an absolute being to provide absolute truth. R.C. Sproul was absolutely correct when he said, "Only God can provide us with an eternal perspective and speak to us with absolute and final authority."

John W. Montgomery asserts:

The plain consequence is that the only possible answer to modern man's quest for the ultimate meaning of history and for an absolute ethical standard would have to lie in a revelation from outside the world. If such a revelation does not exist, man will of logical (not merely practical) necessity remain forever bound to his cultural relativities, forever ignorant of life's meaning. But if such a revelation should exist, it would explode the world—turn it, as men said the early Christians did, upside-down (Acts 17:6).

◆ **Because of the consistency of the Bible from beginning to end**

Consider the following facts about Bible itself:

- ◆ The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years.
- ◆ The Bible was written by more than 40 different authors.
- ◆ The Bible was written on three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- ◆ The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
- ◆ The Bible was written in many different places: Moses and David in the wilderness; Daniel and Solomon in a palace; Jeremiah in a dungeon; Paul in a Roman prison; Luke while traveling; John on the island of Patmos; etc.
- ◆ The writers of Scripture came from different walks of life: Moses, a political leader; Amos, a herdsman; Solomon, a king; Luke, a physician; Matthew, a tax collector; Daniel, a prime minister; Peter, a fisherman; Joshua, a military general; Nehemiah, a cupbearer; Paul, a Rabbi; etc.
- ◆ The Bible was written at different times: David wrote in times of war; Solomon in times of peace; Daniel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel in times of exile; etc.
- ◆ The writers of Scripture wrote in different moods: some authors wrote from the heights of joy and others in the depths of sorrow.

In light of all the variables mentioned above, it is nothing short of a miracle that the Bible is absolutely consistent in its message from Genesis through Revelation. In a Baptist Church, you can't get two people to agree on anything and yet the Bible has more than 40 human authors, writing on three continents, over a period of 1,500 years and they are in perfect agreement on every single issue. This could not happen unless the Bible was the product of a divine work of God!

In their humanity, several New Testament writers had sharp disagreements. Paul and Barnabas had a severe argument that led to them separating from one another (*Acts 15:36-41*). Paul confronted Peter publicly before the elders in the church at Antioch because of his hypocrisy (*Galatians 2:11-21*). In their humanity, these men had their differences like all of us. But when they picked up their quills to pen the word of God, they were in complete accord with one another because the same God was guiding each man's quill. Simple logic tells me that the writers of Scripture could **never** have gotten together to develop a plan to deceive the world! The consistency of the Bible is a powerful argument that it **REALLY** is the word of God.

◆ **Because the Bible changes lives**

No other book has influenced man and history as has the Bible. The Bible is the most remarkable book ever printed. Consider the following facts:

- The world's first printed book was a Bible—Gutenberg's Bible.
- The most expensive book in the world is a Bible—Gutenberg's Bible.
- One of the most expensive manuscripts in the world is the Codex Sinaiticus manuscript of the Bible. The manuscript contains almost all of the New Testament and more than half of the Old Testament. It is dated at A.D. 350.
- The longest telegram in history contained the Revised Version of the New Testament sent from New York to Chicago.
- The largest first edition of any book in history was a Bible—1,000,000 copies.
- The Bible continues to be the number one selling book every year and the number one selling book of all time.
- The Bible has been published in more languages and read by more people than any other book in history.

The most convincing proof that the Bible is true lies in its power to transform lives. If the Bible was not changing lives, people would quit buying it and printers would quit printing it. And yet year-after-year, decade-after-decade, and century-after-century the Bible is the number one selling book in the world. D.L. Moody is quoted as saying, "*The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives.*" Logic tells me that there is something special about the Bible.

◆ **No other book has been attacked like the Bible**

No other book in history has been attacked like the Bible. Satan has led a vicious and continual attack against the Bible. Consider the following examples:

- **Diocletian**

When Diocletian became the Emperor of Rome, he issued a decree that everyone who possessed a copy of the word of God, preached it, professed it, or practiced it would be put to death. The motive behind this degree was to destroy Christians. Diocletian's governors told him that Christians were people of the Word and if you want to destroy Christians you must destroy the word of God. The armies of Rome persecuted and even killed thousands of Christians simply because they professed a belief in the word of God. When Diocletian thought he had been successful in destroying Christianity, he erected a huge column over a burned and charred Bible and made this announcement, "*From this moment on, the Word has been destroyed and the name 'Christian' is extinct on the face of the earth.*" However, a mere

ten years later, Constantine became Emperor of Rome, declared that he was a Christian, and pronounced religious liberty for all Christians.

- **John Wycliffe**

John Wycliffe (1328-84) completed his work of translating the Scriptures into the English language in 1382. On May 22, 1377, Pope Gregory XI issued five Papal Bulls (*edicts*) ordering Wycliffe's arrest for translating the Bible from the sacred Latin tongue into the vulgar tongue of the common man—Midland English. Wycliffe's friends protected him from the authorities until he died a natural death by a stroke (*his second one in two years*) on December 31, 1384.

In A.D. 1415, 31 years after Wycliffe died, the Council of Constance convicted Wycliffe of 267 heresies. Forty-three years after his death, Catholic Church officials dug up Wycliffe's body, burned it, and scattered the ashes over the River Swift. However, the story doesn't end there. The River Swift runs into the River Avon, the River Avon, runs into the River Severn, the River Severn runs into the sea, and the sea reaches the seven continents of the world. As the water carried the ashes of John Wycliffe to world, so God's Word was carried to the world.

Why did Wycliffe translate the Bible into English? I will let him answer in his own words, "*Holy Scripture is the pre-eminent authority for every Christian, and the rule of faith and of all human perfection.*" To Wycliffe the Bible became the sole authority for all of life. He felt that the laity could not know the basics of the faith unless they knew the Bible. And they could not know the Bible unless it was in their own language.

- **Voltaire**

Voltaire, the famous French atheist died in 1778. Shortly before his death, he predicted that the Bible would be "*swept from existence and passed into history*" within 100 years. Within 50 years, Voltaire was extinct and his house had been converted into a warehouse for storing Bibles for the Geneva Bible Society!

The irony is that 150 years after Voltaire's infamous prediction (*on December 25, 1933*), the British government paid the equivalent of \$500,000 to the Russian government for the Codex Sinaiticus, an ancient manuscript of the Bible while on that very day you could buy Voltaire's works for 11 cents on the streets of France and men were paying half-a-million dollars for one copy of God's Word.!

- **David Hume**

Rationalist David Hume (1711-1776), known for his philosophical skepticism and belief that there was no absolute truth, was an outspoken critic of the word of God. Shortly before his death in 1776, Hume said, "*I see the sunset of Christianity.*" Hume must have been a confused man. He couldn't tell the difference between a sunrise and a sunset!

Dr. Bernard Ramm shares this observation:

A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and the committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put. No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology or belles letters of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? The Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions...It still remains the most published and the most read book in the world of literature.

Vance Havner remarked, "*I believe the Bible is the word of God—every word of it. The Old Book has been buried many times. However, the corpse has a habit of outliving its pallbearers.*"

John Clifford wrote:

I see, I pause, beside the blacksmith's door and heard the anvil ring the vespers chimes. Then looking in I saw upon the floor old hammers worn out with beating years of time. "How many anvil have you had," said I, "to wear and batter all these hammers so?" "Just one," he said, and then with twinkling eye, "the anvil wears out the hammers, you know."

For two millennia skeptics have swung their hammers against the anvil of God's Word. However, the hammers are gone and the anvil remains! Why do men hate the Bible so very much? Why are they burning copies of the Bible and not the latest Tom Clancy or John Grisham novel? It is because the Bible **REALLY** is the word of God!

- ◆ **But aren't there contradictions in the Bible?**

No! I confess that there are some difficult verses in the Bible but there are no contradictions. Any apparent contradictions can be explained by examining the text in the original language, history, or culture. Archaeological discoveries have explained almost all of the supposed contradictions that were raised in the 19th century.

The following is the resume' of a man named Gleason L. Archer who is one of the world's leading experts on alleged errors in the Bible:

- He was an undergraduate classics major at Harvard University studying Latin, Greek, French, and German.
- He graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with a major in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic.
- He holds a Ph.D from Harvard Graduate School.
- In post-graduate work, he studied the languages of Akkadian and Syriac and teaches courses on these languages.
- He studied at the Oriental Institute in Chicago specializing in Middle Kingdom Egyptian studies and Eighteenth Dynasty historical records as well studying the languages of Coptic and Sumerian.
- He has spent time in the Holy land at most of the important archeological sites.
- He lived in Beirut, Lebanon where he studied modern literary Arabic.

Regarding alleged errors in the manuscripts from which our Bible is translated, Dr. Gleason stated:

In my opinion this charge [that there are errors in the Scriptures] can be refuted and its falsity exposed by an objective study done in a consistent, evangelical perspective...I candidly believe that I had been confronted just about all the biblical difficulties under discussion in theological circles today—especially those pertaining to the interpretation and defense Scripture...As I have dealt with one apparent discrepancy after another and studied the alleged contradictions between the biblical record and the evidence of linguistics, archaeology, or science, my confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture has been repeatedly verified and strengthened by the discovery that almost every problem in Scripture that has ever been discovered by man, from ancient times until now, has been dealt with in a completely satisfactory manner by the biblical text itself—or else by an objective archeological information.

In light of the fact that Dr. Archer:

- Is fluent in 15 biblical and near-Eastern languages.
- Has done an extensive study in archaeology in the Holy Land.
- Has been trained in the collection of and presentation of legal evidence.

His testimony cannot be dismissed as that of a preacher who speaks with more emotion than fact.

Let me also share the resume' of Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, an Old Testament authority and author of the book entitled, *A Scientific Investigation Of The Old Testament*. He is also is one of the world's leading experts on alleged errors in the Bible:

- He could read the New Testament in nine different languages by the age 25.
- He can recite from memory a Hebrew translation of the entire New Testament without missing a single syllable.
- He can recite large portions of the Old Testament in Hebrew without missing a single syllable.
- He has learned 45 languages and dialects.
- He is also a master in the fields of paleography and philology.

After a lifetime of study, Dr. Wilson dogmatically asserts that no critic has succeeded in proving an error in the Old Testament.

Theologian, philosopher, and trial attorney John Warwick Montgomery observes, "*I myself have never encountered an alleged contradiction in the Bible which could not be cleared up by the use of the original languages of the Scriptures and/or by the use of accepted principles of literary and historical interpretation.*"

John W. Haley examined 900 alleged problems in Scripture and concluded, "*I cannot but avow, as the [conclusion] of my investigation, the profound conviction that every difficulty and discrepancy in the Scriptures is...capable of a fair and reasonable solution.*" Greek scholar Dr. William Arndt concluded in his own study of alleged contradictions and errors in the Bible, "*We may say with full conviction that no instances of this sort occur anywhere in the Scriptures.*"

◆ **My personal testimony**

I have studied the Bible seriously for the past 30 years literally investing tens of thousands of hours in studying its pages. I have never found a passage that has shaken my faith. Many times I have felt like Mark Twain who said, *"It's not the things that I don't understand about the Bible that keep me up at night. It's the things I do understand!"*

I confess that for the past 30 years I have had an affair. I have given more time to my love than my wife. The name of my love you ask—the Bible. I assure you that I have not given my life for a lie! I have staked my life and my eternity on the fact that the Bible is the word of God.

♦ **A supernatural revelation is consistent with a supernatural God**

In last week's sermon, we offered several logical proofs for the existence of God. If God does exist, and we certainly believe that He does, it is only logical that He:

- Would have infinite power.
- Would have infinite knowledge.
- Would have a divine plan for every man.
- Would possess the ability to communicate that plan to man.

There is nothing in reason that denies the possibility of God's revelation of Himself and His will to mankind. To the contrary, logic points to the divine origin of the Bible.

REASON DEMANDS IT

II. HISTORY VERIFIES IT

If the Bible is **REALLY** the word of God, we would expect to find it be historically accurate. Unlike all other writings of the world religions, the Bible is historically verifiable.

In Luke chapter 3 and verse 1, we have 15 historical references in this one verse:

Luke 3:1: *"In the fifteenth year [1] of the reign of Tiberius Caesar [2]—when Pontius Pilate [3] was governor [4] of Judea [5], Herod [6] tetrarch [7] of Galilee [8], his brother Philip [9] tetrarch [10] of Iturea [11] and Traconitis [12], and Lysanias [13] tetrarch [14] of Abilene [15]."*

Every single one of these historical statements is historically accurate and has been verified in secular history. This proves that the Bible is historically accurate. **The Bible does provide facts for our faith.**

In his book *Countdown*, G. B. Hardy points out:

When you consider the great writings of the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans, how they are saturated with mythology, superstition, and fantasy...replete with scientific blunders, surely it is impossible that the Bible could escape without error. Still it stands without a single proven error after thirty-four centuries of scholarship.

In his work *Antiquities*, Josephus, the Jewish historian and contemporary of Christ, offers abundant references, facts, figures, and characters that are found in both the Old and New Testaments. Dr. F.F. Bruce, who was Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, sums up the writings of Josephus:

Here, in the pages of Josephus, we meet many figures who are well-known to us from the New Testament: the colorful family of the Herod's; the Roman emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero; Quirinius, the governor of Syria; Pilate, Felix, and Festus, the procurators of Judea; the high-priestly families—Annas, Caiaphas, Ananias, and the rest; the Pharisees and Sadducees; and so on.

The following chart lists famous writers and historians of the past. The writings of every one of these men are accepted as authentic. Notice that we do **not** have any of the original manuscripts of their writings. Note also how few copies of their works are in existence and the time span between when they wrote and the earliest copy that we have of those writings:

THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	# Of Copies
Plato	400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 years	7
Caesar	100 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,000 years	10
Aristotle	300 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,400 years	5
Tacitus	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1,000 years	20
Herodotus	400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 years	8
Thucydides	400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300 years	8
Livy	A.D. 30	A.D. 900	900 years	20
Homer	800 B.C.	A.D. 250	1,050 years	650

Now note how the manuscripts of the New Testament compare with the writers of antiquity:

New Testament	A.D. 100	A.D. 250	150 years	5,664
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The number 5,664 refers to complete Greek New Testament manuscripts—the oldest dated at 200 A.D. This number does not count:

- ◆ Fragments of individual books or multiple books. If it did, the number would exceed 25,000.
- ◆ Manuscripts in Latin, the number of which is approximately 9,000.

Also, the date of 250 A.D. refers to the oldest complete manuscript of the New Testament. We have fragments or complete manuscripts of individual books that are even older. The oldest manuscript of the New Testament is John Rylands Papyrus fragment of the Gospel of John dated by some as early as A.D. 125.

The manuscript evidence for the New Testament is far, far superior to the manuscripts of the writers of antiquity!!! The fact that we have so many New Testament manuscripts that date so close to the life of Christ is a powerful argument for the authenticity of the New Testament. F.F. Bruce stated, *“If the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.”*

The Bible is also unique when you compare it to the writings of the founders of other world religions. Edwin Yamauchi explains:

The fact is that we have better historical documentation for Jesus than for the founder of any other ancient religion...although the Gathas of Zoroaster, about 1000 B.C., are believed to be authentic, most of the Zoroastrian scriptures were not put into writing until the third century A.D. The most popular Parsi biography of Zoroaster was written in A.D. 1278. The Scriptures of Buddha, who lived in the sixth century B.C., were not put into writing until after the Christian era, and the first biography of Buddha was written in the first century A.D. Although we have the sayings of Mohammed, who lived from A.D. 570-632, in the Qur'an, his biography was not written until 767—more than a full century after his death.

J. Gresham Machen, the brilliant New Testament scholar from Princeton University, concludes:

We know that the gospel story is true partly because of the early date of the documents in which it appears, the evidence as to their authorship, the internal evidence of their truth, the impossibility of explaining them as being based upon deception or upon myth.

HISTORY VERIFIES IT

III. SCIENCE AND ARCHAEOLOGY SUPPORT IT

Both science and archaeology support the facts presented in the Bible. Let's consider both fields and their support of the people, places, and events of the Bible:

SCIENCE

All of my life, I have heard people ridicule the Bible as scientifically inaccurate and outdated. This is not true! In his book *The Reliability of the Bible*, A. E. Wilder-Smith wrote:

In the twentieth century it is commonly presumed that the Bible is fraught with scientific inaccuracies and misconceptions. Students are often given the impression that numerous scientific policies, including a flat earth and a geocentric universe, are contained within the Bible. However, when the biblical text is carefully examined the reader will quickly discover an uncanny scientific accuracy unparalleled by any document of antiquity...The Bible does not use scientific jargon nor is it a scientific text per se...In fact, throughout the Bible we find scientifically accurate concepts about physical universe that were not "discovered" by modern scientists until very recent times.

One of the ways that the Bible indicates its divine authorship is by revealing accurate and detailed knowledge of the physical universe. The fact that the Bible revealed scientific information centuries and sometimes millennia before science discovered those truths is a very strong argument for the Bible being the word of God. Let me share a few examples of scientific information revealed in the Bible:

◆ The universe was created in a moment of time

The opening line of the Bible says, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). Moses said that God created the visible world in

a moment of time by simply speaking the words. Scientists have rejected the Creation account of the Bible because they believe that matter is eternal and thus was not created.

In his book *Origins and Destiny*, research scientist Dr. Robert Gange writes:

In the past, scientists believed that the First Law of Thermodynamics led to a "steady state" theory of the universe: that the universe and everything in it has existed in one form or other forever. Today, there's a problem with this idea because the beginning of the universe has actually been measured. Although the measurement is indirect, it nonetheless teaches that there actually was a beginning...Thus, the older idea of an externally existing world is now known to have a problem. These measurements of what scientists call the background radiation that fills the universe tell us that the world is not eternal, but that it actually had a beginning.

Writing in the New York Times, Robert Jastrow, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, asked this question, "Have Astronomers Found God?" and then suggested that they have or that they are very close to it. Jastrow, who professes to be an agnostic, argues that the evidence from astronomy demonstrates that the universe had a beginning at a certain moment in time. He wrote:

Now we see how the astronomical evidence leads to a biblical view of the origin of the world...The details differ, but the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same: the chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy.

◆ **The universe is deteriorating**

The Bible's states on several occasions that the universe is "wearing out" and "passing away" (see *Psalm 102:25,26; Isaiah 51:6; Matthew 24:35; II Peter 3:7,10-13*). Prior to the 20th century, the idea that the universe was "wearing out" or "passing away" was foreign to the minds of most scientists. In fact, the consensus among scientists was that it was **not** decaying. Such scientific knowledge could not have been derived from observation but only through the development of sophisticated scientific equipment. And yet, God stated that the universe was "wearing out" or "passing away" 3,000 years ago!

◆ **The earth is round**

Until Columbus made his voyage to America and returned (1492), most people believed that the world was flat. And yet, in 700 B.C., the prophet Isaiah wrote that God "...sits enthroned above the circle of the earth" (*Isaiah 40:22*). The Hebrew word translated as "circle" in English literally means, "sphere." God stated that the world was round more than 2,000 years before the scientific community came to a consensus that it was indeed round.

◆ **The earth is suspended in space**

In ancient times, it was commonly believed that the earth rested upon something—such as an elephant, a turtle, or the back of Atlas. And yet, in the oldest book in the Bible we read, "*He [God] spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing*" (*Job 26:7*).

◆ **The sun**

Until a few centuries ago, it was believed that the Sun was the center of the universe and that it did not move. Today we know that the sun does move in an orbit in the Milky Way Galaxy at speeds close to 600,000 miles per hour. Some 3,000 years ago, the psalmist wrote that the sun follows a circular path through the universe, "*In the heavens he [God] has pitched a tent for the sun...It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other...*" (*Psalms 19:4,6*).

◆ **Ocean currents**

In Psalm 8:8 we read about "*the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*" But it wasn't until the mid-nineteenth century that Matthew Fontaine Maury, the "*father of oceanography*," published his discovery that the ocean possessed predictable paths or currents.

◆ **Circumcision**

God instructed Abraham specifically to circumcise newborn males on the eighth day of life (*Genesis 17:12*). It wasn't until the 20th century that scientists discovered why God chose the eighth day. Scientists have learned that on the eighth day of life the vitamin K in the infant's diet permits prothrombin, an important blood-clotting factor, to reach its peak. To circumcise a child a day earlier, when the clotting factor is not at its peak, could result in excessive bleeding and death.

In his 500-page book, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, Dr. Henry Morris lists dozens of additional examples of scientific foreknowledge found in the Scriptures.

ARCHAEOLOGY

To be perfectly honest, archaeology can never prove whether the Bible is the word of God or not. It does not confirm that what Jesus said was correct. Spiritual truths cannot be proven by archaeological discoveries. However, the accuracy of the Bible concerning people, places, and dates has been confirmed hundreds of times by the science of archaeology. Notice what Jesus said:

John 3:12: *"I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"*

Jesus expected that His accuracy in factual and testable matters to be proof that He was telling the truth about spiritual matters that could not be tested. On one occasion Jesus healed a paralytic. Notice Jesus' line of reasoning:

Mark 2:5-12: *"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'" ⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?' ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralytic, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"*

The scribes were thinking to themselves that only God could forgive sins (and they were right—*Isaiah 43:25; Micah 7:18,19*). Jesus knew what they were thinking (*John 2:25; I Samuel 16:7; I Kings 8:39; I Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 17:10; Ezekiel 11:5*) and asked them a question, "Which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or take up your bed and walk?" The correct answer is that it is easier to say your sins are forgiven because that is

internal and no one can see it to prove you wrong. If you are paralyzed and I say, "Get up and walk" you will know immediately whether there has been a miracle or not (*this has an interesting application in light of the practice of faith healers today who are infamous for healing high blood pressure, diabetes, allergies, gall stones, headaches, and other internal maladies that no one can see*).

Jesus told the Pharisees that He could do the easier, forgive the man's sins, by doing the harder, healing him so he can walk. **The healing of the man physically proved that Jesus could also forgive sins.** If He can forgive sins, then He is God.

Jesus proved that He could forgive sins in the non-verifiable realm by demonstrating that he could heal in the physical realm. The accuracy of the Bible concerning people, places, and dates is a strong argument that the Bible is truthful in the non-verifiable realm.

Archaeology is of major importance to the word of God for two reasons:

- ◆ Archaeology provides objective evidence for the accuracy of the events recorded in the Scriptures.
- ◆ Archaeology offers greater insight to the events recorded in the Scriptures.

Jack Cottrell dogmatically asserts:

Through the wealth of data uncovered by historical and archeological research, we are able to measure the Bible's historical accuracy. In every case where its claims can be thus tested, the Bible proves to be accurate and reliable.

Using the Bible as a guide, the renowned Jewish archaeologist Nelson Glueck has discovered more than 1,000 ancient sites in Trans-Jordan and 500 more in the Negev. He states, "*...No archaeological discovery has ever been made that contradicts or controverts historical statements in Scripture.*"

In fact, in the words of Dr. Joseph Free, "*Archaeology has confirmed countless passages which have been rejected by critics as unhistorical or contradictory to known facts.*" For example:

- ◆ **Luke 3:1 refers to Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilene in A.D. 27.**

For centuries scholars pointed to this verse as evidence that Luke was in error because it was common knowledge that Lysanias was not a tetrarch but rather the ruler of Chalcis and that he had died in 36 B.C., more than half a century before John the Baptist began his ministry. Archaeologist John McRay explains, "*An inscription was later found from the time of Tiberius, A.D. 14-37, which names Lysanias as tetrarch in Abila near Damascus just as Luke had written. It turned out there had been two government officials named Lysanias.*" So Luke was right. There was a military governor of Syria from 12 B.C. to A.D. 16 named Quirinius.

◆ **Luke's reference to "politarchs"**

Acts 17:6 refers to "politarchs" in the city of Thessalonica (*translated as "city officials" in the NIV*). John McRay points out:

For a long time people thought Luke was mistaken, because no evidence of the term 'politarchs' had been found in any ancient Roman documents. However, an inscription on a first-century arch was later found that begins, 'In the time of the politarchs...' And then, lo and behold, archaeologists found more than thirty-five inscriptions that mention politarchs, several of these in Thessalonica from the same time period Luke was referring to.

◆ **Critics often point to a contradiction between the Gospel of Luke and Mark.**

Luke states that Jesus was walking into Jericho when He healed the blind man Bartimaeus (*Luke 18:35*) and Mark says that Jesus was coming out of Jericho (*Mark 10:46*). This is a clear contradiction. Does the Bible contain a contradiction? John McRay offered this insight, "*Jericho was in at least four different locations as much as a quarter of a mile apart in ancient times...The point is, you can be coming out of one site were Jericho existed and be going into another one...*" The Bible does **not** contain a contradiction! Both Luke and Mark are correct.

◆ **The Pool of Bethesda**

In John 5:1-15, Scriptures record Jesus healing an invalid by the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. John stated that the pool had five porticoes (*colonnaded porches or walkways*). Critics believed that John was not accurate because no such place had been found. Recently, the Pool of Bethesda has been found approximately forty feet below ground level. When the pool was excavated, archaeologists found five porticoes just like the Gospel of John records.

◆ David

No record of King David, one of the Bible's most prominent characters, has ever been found outside of the Bible, which led one critic to claim, "*King David is about as historical as King Arthur and his Round Table.*" That is until 1993 when a ninth century B.C. Aramaic inscription referring to "*The House of David*" was found on a plaque in an ancient ruin in the city of Dan in upper Galilee (*the plaque is on display in the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana, California*).

◆ Pontius Pilate

For centuries critics stated that Pontius Pilate was not a historical figure because there was no reference to him outside of the New Testament. But in 1961, while excavating the ruins of an amphitheatre in the city of Caesarea, along the northern coast of Israel, a two-foot by three-foot slab of stone was discovered dating from the first century. The Latin inscription contains the words, "*Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea.*" I saw this inscription when I visited the city of Caesarea.

◆ Caiaphas

Another biblical figure that is mentioned in the Bible but nowhere else in recorded history is a man that played a prominent role in the death of Christ—the high priest Caiaphas. In 1990, builders of a water park in Jerusalem discovered a burial cave containing a tomb marked with the family name of Caiaphas. Inside were the bones six different people, including a 60-year-old man who, most likely, is Caiaphas himself.

◆ The Hittites

For many years Christians were ridiculed for believing the Bible's account of the Hittites. The Bible refers to them 47 times but there is no confirmation of their existence in secular history. But in 1906, an entire Hittite city was uncovered, along with the royal archives that gave a detailed history of these people. Once again, the Bible was proven to be a historically accurate.

One of the most amazing stories concerning the relationship of archaeology and the Bible is found in the life of Sir William W. Ramsey. As a student, he was taught that the book of Acts was written by a forger in the 2nd century rather than an eyewitness account from the mid-first century. As an archaeologist studying the history of Asia Minor, Ramsey was eventually compelled to consider the writings of Luke. After years of doing

archaeological research in Asia Minor and Greece, Ramsey discovered that archaeology confirmed the reliability of the Bible. He carefully examined Luke's references to thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands, finding not a single mistake. The evidence was so convincing that he became Christian. Ramsey describes his conviction:

Luke is a historian of the first rank...to...be placed along with the very greatest of historians...I take the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in regard to his trustworthiness...you may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment.

The point of this is that if the Bible can be trusted to be 100% accurate in historical details, it can be trusted in its entirety! Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, the famous British classical scholar and the principal librarian and director of the British Museum for twenty-one years, had this to say:

The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout centuries.

SCIENCE AND ARCHAEOLOGY SUPPORT IT

IV. PROPHECY PROVES IT

Certainly the most persuasive argument for the divine origin of the Bible is in the area of fulfilled prophecy. It has been estimated that 34% of the Bible was prophetic when it was written. Because God alone knows the future (see *Isaiah 41:21-23; 46:9,10; Daniel 2:28*), fulfilled prophecy clearly demonstrates that the Bible is not the work of man but the divine revelation of God.

There are 73 major prophecies in the Old Testament that give specific details about the coming Messiah. The following is an abbreviated list of prophecies fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah (*we have included the prophetic reference from the Old Testament as well as the passage in which they were fulfilled in the New Testament*):

- ◆ The Messiah would be a man born of a woman (*Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be of the lineage of Shem (*I Chronicles 1:24-27; Luke 3:36*).

- ◆ The Messiah would be of the lineage of Abraham (*Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; Acts 3:25; Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:34; Galatians 3:16*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be of the lineage of Isaac (*Genesis 17:19; Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be of the lineage of Jacob (*Genesis 28:14; Numbers 24:17; Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34*).
- ◆ The Messiah would come out of the tribe of Judah (*Genesis 49:9,10; Matthew 1:2,3; Luke 3:33*).
- ◆ The Messiah would come out of the lineage of Jesse (*Isaiah 11:1,2,10; Matthew 1:5,6; Luke 3:31*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be the heir to the throne of David (*Isaiah 9:7; 11:1-5; II Samuel 7:13; Matthew 1:1,6*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be born in the city of Bethlehem (*Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be born of a virgin (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18,23; Luke 1:26-35*).
- ◆ At His birth, there would be a massacre of infants (*Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16-18*).
- ◆ As an infant, the Messiah would flee to Egypt (*Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:14,15*).
- ◆ The Messiah would minister in the country of Galilee (*Isaiah 9:1,2; Matthew 4:12-16*).
- ◆ He would live in the city of Nazareth in Galilee (*Isaiah 9:1,2; Matthew 2:23; 4:15*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be God's prophet (*Deuteronomy 18:15; John 1:45; 6:14; Acts 3:19-26*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek (*Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 5:5,6; 6:20; 7:15-17*).
- ◆ He would be heralded by the Lord's special messenger—John the Baptist (*Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:1,2*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be rejected by His own people—the Jews (*Isaiah 53:3; Psalm 2:2; 118:22; John 1:11; 5:43; Luke 4:29; 17:25; 23:18; I Peter 2:7*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be filled with wisdom, knowledge, power, and might (*Isaiah 11:2-4; Psalm 45:7; Luke 2:52; Luke 4:18*).
- ◆ He would perform miracles during His earthly ministry (*Isaiah 35:2-6; 61:1,2; Matthew 9:35; Luke 4:16-21*).
- ◆ The Messiah would enter Jerusalem triumphantly (*Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 62:11; John 12:13,14; Matthew 21:1-11; John 12:12*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be betrayed by a friend (*Psalms 41:9; Mark 14:10,43-45; Matthew 26:14-16*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (*Zechariah 11:12,13; Matthew 26:15; 27:3-10*).

- ◆ The betrayal money would be returned and used to purchase a field formerly owned by a potter (*Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:3-10*).
- ◆ In a mock trial, witnesses would make false accusations against the Messiah (*Psalms 27:12; 35:11; Matthew 26:60,61*).
- ◆ The Messiah would remain silent when these accusations were made (*Isaiah 53:7; Psalm 38:13,14; Matthew 26:62,63; 27:12-14*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be smitten and spat upon (*Isaiah 50:6; Mark 14:65; 15:17; John 19:1-3; 18:22*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be hated without cause (*Psalms 69:4; 109:3-5; John 15:23-25*).
- ◆ The Messiah would suffer on behalf of fallen mankind (*Isaiah 53:4-6,12; Matthew 8:16,17; Romans 4:25; I Corinthians 15:3*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be crucified (*Psalms 22:14-18; Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:33; John 19:16*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be crucified with sinners (*Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27,28; Luke 23:33; John 19:18,23*).
- ◆ The Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced (*Psalms 22:16; Zechariah 12:10; Luke 23:33; John 19:37; 20:25-27*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be mocked and insulted (*Psalms 22:6-8; Matthew 27:31,39-44; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-39*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be given vinegar to drink (*Psalms 69:21; John 19:29; Matthew 27:34,48; Mark 15:23,36; John 19:28,29*).
- ◆ The Messiah would hear prophetic words repeated in mockery (*Psalms 22:8; Matthew 27:43*).
- ◆ The Messiah would pray for His enemies (*Psalms 109:4; Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:34*).
- ◆ The Messiah's side would be pierced (*Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34*).
- ◆ Soldiers would cast lots for the Messiah's clothing (*Psalms 22:18; Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; John 19:23,24*).
- ◆ Not a single bone of the Messiah would be broken (*Psalms 34:20; Exodus 12:46; John 19:33,36*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be buried with the rich (*Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60*).
- ◆ The Messiah would be resurrected (*Psalms 16:9-11; Matthew 28:5,9; Mark 16:6,9; Luke 24:36-48; John 20:9; Acts 2:31*).
- ◆ The Messiah would ascend back to heaven after His resurrection (*Psalms 66:18; Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8-10*).
- ◆ The Messiah would then sit down at God's right hand (*Psalms 110:1; Hebrews 1:3*).
- ◆ The Messiah would then be given dominion over all peoples, nations, and languages (*Daniel 7:13,14; Revelation 11:15*).

concerning the Messiah could not be arranged! Norman Geisler has correctly observed:

It should be noted that Jesus' claim to be the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies was not forced, as though He were trying, either deliberately or deceptively, to make the events of His life to correspond to the preconditions about the Messiah. In fact, many of the Messianic prophecies which were fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth were beyond His human control altogether, such as (1) the place of His birth (Micah 5:2); (2) the time (Daniel 9:25); (3) the manner of His birth (Isaiah 7:14); (4) His flight into Egypt (Hosea 11:1); (5) His childhood in Nazareth (Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 2:23); (6) the manner of His death (Psalm 22:16); and (7) the subsequent piercing (Zechariah 12:10). Even on the occasions where Jesus was conscious of bringing to pass the prophecies of the Old Testament (e.g., Matthew 3:15; 5:17; 26:54), there is no evidence that He manipulated events to demonstrate His Messianic credentials. On the contrary, Jesus carefully avoided any fanfare about the fulfillment of prophecy for His own messianic identity.

Fulfilled prophecy validates the word of God!

PROPHECY PROVES IT

V. CHRIST CONFIRMED IT

A very good reason why we should believe the Bible to be God's Word is because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. John R. W. Stott expressed his opinion this way, "*Jesus' own reverent submission to the Scriptures is one of the principal reasons for our own acceptance of the authority of the Scripture.*"

There was never any confusion in Jesus' mind concerning the credibility of the Scriptures for He knew that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit (*Mark 12:36; Matthew 22:43*). Jesus spoke of the Scriptures as the "*word of God*" (*Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13; Luke 8:11,12; John 5:1; 10:35*) or "*the commandment of God*" (*Matthew 15:6*). Jesus referred to the Old Testament Scriptures as the word of God when He said, "*Have you not read what God said to you?*" (*Matthew 22:31; Mark 12:26*) Jesus appealed to the Scriptures as God's final and full authoritative revelation when He said, "*...the Scripture cannot be broken*" (*John 10:35*).

Jesus expected others to accept the Old Testament as authoritative. He would often inquire why they had not read the Old Testament:

Matthew 12:3-5: *"He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵ Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent?"*

Matthew 19:4: *"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female."*

Matthew 21:16: *"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"*

Mark 12:10,11: *"Haven't you read this scripture: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone ; ¹¹ the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*

Luke 10:26: *"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

Matthew 22:29-32: *"Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. ³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"*

Jesus clearly taught that every word of the Old Testament was the word of God and thus:

- ◆ Would be fulfilled exactly as written.
- ◆ The word of God is eternal.

Notice what Jesus said:

Matthew 5:18: *"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen,*

will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

Matthew 24:35: *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (see also Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33).*

Luke 16:17: *"It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law."*

Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of Israel for substituting their own traditions for the commandments of God (*Mark 7:13*), but Jesus never corrected any portion of Scripture because they were perfectly written and perfectly preserved. **There is no doubt that if there were something wrong in the Jewish Scriptures, Jesus would have corrected it.**

Notice Jesus' relationship to the Scriptures:

- ◆ To Jesus, what the Scriptures said, God Himself said (*Matthew 22:31; Mark 2:25; Luke 6:3*).
- ◆ In essence, the Scriptures were Jesus' own words (*Matthew 5:21,22,27,28*). Jesus believed that God the Father told Him what to say and what to speak (*John 12:49*). Thus, Jesus' words were God's own words!
- ◆ On one occasion, Jesus declared, *"These are the Scriptures that testify about me"* (*John 5:39; Matthew 5:17,18*). Jesus understood that His life was the fulfillment of Scripture and frequently called attention to that fact (*Matthew 5:18; 8:17; 13:14; 26:54,56; Mark 7:1-13; 14:49; Luke 4:21; 21:22; John 13:18; 15:25; 17:12*).

In His humanity, Jesus utilized the Scriptures as the food that nourished His soul (*Matthew 4:4*) and strengthened His heart against temptation (*Matthew 4:4,7,10; 12:3; Luke 4:4,8,12*). But above all, the word of God was His textbook for teaching the eternal truths of God to man (*Luke 4:17-21; 24:27,32,44,45*).

It is interesting to note that in quoting the Old Testament, Jesus actually confirmed the authorship of the most often disputed books by the critics:

- Moses wrote the Law rather than a scribe such as Ezra (*Mark 7:10; 10:3-5; 12:19,26; Luke 5:14; 16:29-31; 24: 17,44; John 5:45-47; 7:19,23*)
- Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah (*Luke 4:18,19; Matthew 21:5*). Jesus quoted verses from both halves of the book of

Isaiah and attributed the authorship of both passages to Isaiah (*John 12:38-41*).

- Daniel (*Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14*)
- The Psalms (*Matthew 13:35; 21:16,42; 22:44; 23:39; 27:35,46; Mark 12:10,36; 15:34; Luke 13:35; 20:42,43; 23:46; John 2:17; 10:34; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24,36*)

Jesus also referred to the very miracles that critics reject as actual historical events:

- The Creation (*Luke 11:51*)
- Adam and Eve (*Matthew 19:4,5*)
- Noah and the flood (*Matthew 24:37-39*)
- Sodom and Gomorrah (*Luke 10:12*)
- Jonah and the great fish (*Matthew 12:39-41*)

Professor A. Rendle Short insists, "*The most serious reason for regarding the Bible as the word of God is because of the respect in which it was held by Jesus Christ.*" John W. Wenham adds:

To Christ the Bible is true, authoritative, inspired, to him the God of the Bible is the Living God, and the teaching of the Bible is the teaching of the Living God. To him what the Scriptures say, God says.

Handley Moule confesses:

Jesus Christ absolutely trusted the Bible. And though there are in it things inexplicable and intricate that have puzzled me much, I am going to trust the book, not in a blind sense, but reverently because of Him.

Clark Pinnock correctly concludes:

The Bible is not infallible because it says so—but because He says so. There is no more reliable witness to the nature of Scripture than the one who died and rose to be our Savior.

Jesus clearly and forever demonstrated that He was God's Son when He was resurrected from the dead. Whatever God says is true. Jesus, who is God, said that the Bible is God's Word. Therefore, the Bible is God's Word!

CHRIST CONFIRMED IT

VI. THE BIBLE CLAIMS IT

The Bible claims that the Scriptures are the very words of God 3,808 times (e.g. *Isaiah 43:1; Exodus 20 5:1; Jeremiah 1:4*). We realize that you cannot prove that the Bible is the word of God by merely saying, "*The Bible claims to be the word of God.*" This is "*circular reasoning.*" However, if a supernatural God **REALLY** wrote the Bible, then His righteous nature would demand that He claim to be the author. If God had a message to communicate to mankind, then the uniqueness of the message would demand a unique avenue of communication. That is, the Bible would be God's revelation to mankind and because God is holy, then His revelation must be inerrant (see *Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; Romans 3:4*). When you combine what the Bible says about itself with the other proofs that we have shared in this message, the evidence that the Scriptures are truly of the words of God is sufficient to convince someone who sincerely desires to know the truth.

From speaking with people over the years, I have noticed that there is a misunderstanding as to actually how we arrived at the text that many of you are holding in your hands this very minute. Although this subject matter is very complex and detailed and many books have been written on the various parts that I am about share, I would like to give you the Reader's Digest version of how we arrived at the Bible you now have in your hands.

- **How we arrived at the English translation of the Bible**

There are some that believe that the Bible was translated from Hebrew to Greek to Latin to German and then finally into English. That is not true! The English Bible that you hold in your hands was translated directly from Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Therefore, the true meaning of a passage was not lost in translating through several languages.

- **Weren't mistakes made in copying the manuscripts?**

Yes, mistakes were made because men copied the manuscripts and men are fallible. However, by comparing manuscript with manuscript we can see where and when mistakes were made and correct them. By dating the manuscripts, we can determine which ones are the earliest and carry more credence than later ones. In reality, there is less than 40 places (*not 40 verses*) in the New Testament where we are **REALLY** not certain which reading is original. Please note that not a single one of these has any impact on a central doctrine of the faith. The problem is that we are not certain which manuscript has the correct reading. Most study Bibles will identify the problematic passages and in a footnote give the alternate

readings. We have 100 percent of the New Testament and we are sure that 99.9% of it is accurate.

- **How we arrived at which books should be included in the Canon**

There are some that wonder if we have all the books in our Bible that God intended for us to have. For example, there are the 14 books of the Apocrypha that are included in the Catholic Bible but are not included in the Bible that you hold in your hand this morning. There are five questions that the early church asked concerning each book reported to be of God. Those questions were:

- ✦ **Was it written by a prophet, apostle, or close associate of an apostle?** Deuteronomy 18:18 tells us that only a prophet of God will speak the word of God.
- ✦ **Does the book agree with the Old Testament and apostolic doctrine?**
- ✦ **Is the book read in the churches?** Have God's people accepted the book as inspired? Do they use it for worship? Have they made it a part of their lives?
- ✦ **Has the book been accepted by the next generation as being inspired?**

The books that comprise the Hebrew Canon were established before the publication of the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint in approximately 250 B.C. We know the Canon was established before the publication of the Septuagint because the Septuagint contains the same 39 books that are in our English Bible today. Jesus certainly agreed with the composition of the Old Testament canon or He would have corrected it. In fact, we have a statement from the life of Jesus that confirms the Old Testament canon, "*From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah*" (Luke 11:51; Matthew 23:35). Abel was the first martyr recorded in the Scriptures in the first book of the Bible—Genesis (Genesis 4:8) and Zechariah was the last martyr in the last book of the Hebrew Canon—the book of Chronicles.

In A.D. 367, Athanasius of Alexandria, Egypt gave us our earliest list of New Testament books that is identical to our present New Testament. Shortly after Athanasius' list was circulated, Jerome and Augustine expressed their agreement that the New Testament Canon was composed of these same twenty-seven books. The Synod of Hippo, which convened in A.D. 393, listed the same twenty-seven books as comprising the New Testament canon. In A.D. 397, the Third Synod of Carthage concurred with the Synod of Hippo

declaring that the same twenty-seven books comprised the New Testament canon.

The church councils did not **REALLY** decide which books were to be included in the canon. They merely applied the preceding tests to each book and observed that God was using certain books and not others in the lives of believers. They put the books that God was obviously blessing together in one unit that we call the Bible. Actually, God Himself, using those books in the lives of people, is the One that pointed to the books that should be included. For both the Old and New Testaments there were certain books that were accepted by everyone, some books that were disputed, and some that were rejected by all. There were **no** books that were initially accepted and later removed from the canon.

There are several internal evidences in the text of Scripture itself that teach us that the Bible is the inspired word of God:

◆ **The Bible claims to be inspired by God**

The Apostle Paul stated absolutely that the Bible was the word of God:

I Thessalonians 2:13: *"And we also thank God continually because, **when you received the word of God**, which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God**, which is at work in you who believe."*

The Bible is **not** inspired in the sense that we might say that great works of literature or classical works of music are inspired. The Bible is inspired in the sense that **the words of Scripture are the very words of God Himself!**

The Apostle Paul made it clear that all Scripture was inspired when he said, *"All Scripture is God breathed"* (*II Timothy 3:16—"given by inspiration of God"—KJV*). The NIV translators accurately and literally translated the Greek word *theopneustia* as *"God breathed."* In reality, God did not breathe divine life into the words penned. **The words of Scripture are literally the very words breathed out of the mouth of God.** by the writers of Scripture. Scripture is God Himself speaking. John MacArthur clarifies:

Inspiration does not mean the Bible "contains" God's revelation. It does not mean gems of revealed truth are "concealed" in Scripture. It does not mean men wrote God's truth in their own words. It does not mean God merely assisted the writers. It

means that **the words of the Bible are the words of God Himself**. God breathed out every word of Scripture.

John R.W. Stott concludes:

*The meaning, then [of Inspiration—II Timothy 3:16,17], is not that God breathed into the writers, nor that He somehow breathed into the writings to give them their special character, but that **what was written by men was breathed out by God**. He spoke through them. They were His spokesmen.*

◆ **God's Spirit moved upon the writers of Scripture**

Peter clearly tells us that the word of God was not the idea of man but that as God moved upon men, they penned the words of Scripture:

II Peter 1:21: *"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

Peter said that God's Word was not the invention of men out to deceive the world, but that what they spoke came from God. The words "*carried along*" in the Greek text pictures a stick floating along in the current of a stream. The idea is that the word of God flowed into the hearts and minds of the biblical writers and they recorded the words for us. As a small stick is carried along under the complete control and direction of the water, so the Holy Spirit controlled the writers of Scripture. They wrote as the Spirit directed them to write. What they wrote was not their own words but the very words of God.

The Apostle Paul tells us, even as Peter did (*II Peter 1:21*), that he did not invent the words he penned in the New Testament, but he received them directly from Christ Himself:

Galatians 1:11,12: *"I want you to know, brothers, that **the gospel I preached is not something that man made up**.¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ" (see also Galatians 1:20; Romans 9:1; I Timothy 2:7; II Corinthians 11:10,31).*

The reason that the apostles remembered all the experiences they had with Jesus and the very words He spoke was because the Holy Spirit brought the experiences and words to their mind:

John 14:26: *"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

John 16:13: *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."*

These verses tell us that the teachings of Jesus will be remembered, understood, and written down to form the New Testament.

Peter confirms the promise of the Holy Spirit leading the apostles in writing the books of the New Testament:

II Peter 3:2: *"I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the **holy prophets** and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your **apostles**."*

Peter clearly sets forth two categories of inspired writers:

- The "holy prophets".
- The "apostles".

The "holy prophets" refers to the writers of the Old Testament and the "apostles" refers to the writers of the New Testament. In other words, Peter believed that God inspired both the Old and New Testament writers, which means that both the Old and New Testaments are the words of God.

The Old Testament prophets believed that God was speaking to them. For example:

- Isaiah said: *"Thus says the Lord" (Isaiah 43:1).*
- Moses said, *"Then the Lord spoke...saying" (Exodus 25:1).* The Lord told Moses, *"Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say" (Exodus 4:12; see also Exodus 4:15,16) and "You shall speak all that I command you" (Exodus 7:2).*
- Jeremiah said, *"The word of the Lord came to me" (Jeremiah 1:4; see also Jeremiah 1:7,9,17; 26:2).*
- David said, *"The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was on my tongue" (II Samuel 23:2).*
- Ezekiel was told by God to *"...speak with my words to them" (Ezekiel 3:26,27; 4:7; 33:22).*

- Micah testified, "*I am full with power—with the Spirit of the Lord*" (*Micah 3:8*).

In the book *Design for Discipleship*, the author remarked:

*The Bible is the most remarkable book ever written! About forty men of many occupations did the writing. They wrote over a period of approximately 1,600 years, and in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Yet the Bible has one great theme and central figure—Jesus Christ. All of this would be impossible unless **the Bible had one supreme Author**. And it did—**the Holy Spirit of God!***

Although God did dictate some portions of the word of God, He did use various other means to reveal His inspired word to men, who in turn, revealed it to mankind:

- Dreams (*Daniel 7:1*)
- Visions (*Ezekiel 1:1*)
- The actual voice of God (*Leviticus 1:1*)
- Symbols or object lessons (*Jeremiah 19:1-15*)
- Dictation (*Revelation 2:1-3:22*)
- Eyewitness reports (*I John 1:1-3; Revelation 1:2*)
- Guidance of the Holy Spirit (*II Peter 1:21*)
- Experience or testimony of men (*Psalms 23; 51*)
- Historical research (*Luke 1:1-4*)
- Jesus Christ revealed it (*John 1:14; Hebrews 1:2*)

Although God used a variety of different methods to reveal His Word to man, each verse is as inspired as the next.

◆ **The writers claimed to be:**

- **Writing a historical account**

Luke was the official historian of the New Testament and claimed to be writing a historical account:

Luke 1:1-3: "*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the*

beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus."

Acts 1:1,2: *"In my former book [the Gospel of Luke], Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach² until the day he was taken up to heaven..."*

- **Eyewitnesses of the events that they were recording**

John stated that he was an eyewitness to the events that he wrote about:

I John 1:3: *"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us..."*

John 19:35: *"The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe."*

Revelation 1:1,2,10,11: *"...He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,² who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ...¹⁰ On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,¹¹ which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches."*

Revelation 4:1: *"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet..."*

Peter also claimed to be an eyewitness to the events that he recorded in Scripture:

II Peter 1:16,18: *"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty...¹⁸ We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain."*

- **Telling the absolute truth**

Peter testified that he was telling the absolute truth:

II Peter 1:16-21: *"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus*

*Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.** ¹⁷ For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."¹⁸ **We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.** ¹⁹ And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

What God wrote in Scripture was even more trustworthy than eyewitness accounts. Why? Because every policeman, lawyer, and judge knows that three people can be eyewitnesses to a crime and all three share a slightly different story. Peter knew that the Scripture was inspired by God and thus completely trustworthy.

And Paul also testified that he was telling the absolute truth:

Galatians 1:11,12: *"I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. ¹² I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ" (see also Galatians 1:20; Romans 9:1; I Timothy 2:7; II Corinthians 11:10,31).*

◆ **The writers accepted each others' writings as Scripture**

Several New Testament writers referred to other writers as being inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. The Apostle Paul quoted Luke (*I Timothy 5:18*) who was quoting Moses (*Luke 10:7; Deuteronomy 25:4*). Paul called Luke's writings, "scripture" (*I Timothy 5:18*). In essence, Paul claimed that Luke had the same authority to write Scripture that Moses did. From this we deduce that if Luke's Gospel were authentic, then the book of Acts, which is also written by Luke, would also be Scripture. Since Luke in his Gospel records much of the same material as Matthew, Mark, and John, then they must also be Scripture.

Peter said that all of Paul's epistles were considered Scripture (*II Peter 3:15,16*). Paul himself claimed that he received the Gospel message from God and not from man (*Galatians 1:11,12*). Jude considered Peter to be an authentic writer of Scripture because he quoted Peter in Jude 1:17,18 (*II*

Peter 3:3). The Apostle John claimed to have received the words of Christ and penned them for us (*Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 19:9; 21:5*). Throughout the New Testament the writers referred to each other's writings as "Holy Scripture."

In the opening chapters of the book of Romans, Paul builds a powerful argument that the foundation of the Gospel is to be found in the Old Testament. The writer of the book of Hebrews spends the first 11 chapters showing that the gospel is pre-figured in the Old Testament priesthood and sacrificial system. The New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament literally hundreds of times because they believed the Old Testament to be the very words of God!

Wayne Grudem declares:

Perhaps it has not been stated emphatically enough that nowhere in the Old Testament or in the New Testament does any writer give any hint of the tendency to distrust or consider slightly unreliable any other part of Scripture. Hundreds of texts encourage people to trust Scripture completely, but no text encourages any doubt or even slight distrust of Scripture.

Because the Bible is the word of God, there are several things we need to affirm about it:

◆ **The Bible is infallible**

The Bible says of itself, "*The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple*" (*Psalms 19:7*). The Bible, in its entirety, has no mistakes. Specifically, in its original autographs, it is without error. Obviously, we have no autographs of either Testament. The oldest manuscript of the New Testament is John Rylands Papyrus fragment of the Gospel of John dated by some as early as A.D. 125. Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, our oldest Old Testament manuscript was the Leningrad Codex, dated A.D. 916. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, there were manuscripts of Isaiah and Daniel dated a hundred years or more before the birth of Christ (*the Dead Sea Scrolls provided manuscripts that were 1,000 years older than any previous ones*). The Dead Sea Scrolls contain fragments of many of the other Old Testament books also. We certainly believe that the God who recorded a flawless text could also preserve it!

The Bible is flawless because God, whose essential nature is flawless, authored it (*Psalms 102:12,25-27; Hebrews 1:10-12*). If God's character is

flawless, then the Bible is flawless and it is the ultimate authority. It is the only book in the history of the world that has no errors. Paul called the Scriptures "holy" (*Romans 1:2; II Timothy 3:15*). Everything the Bible says is true.

◆ **The Bible is inerrant**

The Bible is not only infallible in total, but also inerrant in its parts. The terms "infallible" and "inerrant" when applied to Scripture are loosely synonymous. Yet "infallible" is a stronger term. It denotes that the Scriptures are incapable of error. "Inerrant" is a weaker term, noting only that the Scriptures do not err. Infallibility states that it could not possibly have errors and inerrant means that there are no errors. The Bible contains no mistakes in its original manuscripts! Solomon said, "*Every word of God is flawless...*" (*Proverbs 30:5; see also Psalm 119:140*). So every word in the Bible is true.

◆ **The Bible is complete**

The Apostle John closed the book of the Revelation and the New Testament canon with this stern warning:

Revelation 22:18,19: *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*

Someone might say that this warning refers only to the book of the Revelation. To the contrary, because the book of the Revelation is truly God's Word, then this warning would apply to all of God's writings (see *Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32*). Because the Bible is God's Word, it is perfect and complete and we cannot add anything to it. So then, this warning has to apply to all of God's Word.

Secondly, notice where this warning is placed. It was not given at the end of the book of Matthew, but at the end of the last book of the canon. God reminds us at the very end of the Bible that we are not to alter any of it.

Jude tells us that we are to:

Jude 1:3: *"...contend" [to fight to your death], for the "faith" [the word of God, the divine body of truth], that was "once for*

all" [never needing addition to, something that has lasting results], "entrusted" [in the aortist passive tense which means that it was given one time forever. Literally a past act with no continuing revelation], "to the saints..."

In plain English, Jude said that we are to fight for the word of God that was given in its perfect form and needs no corrections or additions in the present age!

When God gave us His Word, it was complete. We don't need dreams, visions, or revelations today. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that God has spoken through His Son (*Hebrews 1:2*) and not through Bob, Mary, or Bill. Whenever you mix God's Word with man's words, you have contradictions and confusion. We need a sure foundation upon which to build our lives and the word of God is such a foundation (*Matthew 7:24-27*).

Let me clearly state that **the Bible does not "contain" the words of God—it is the word of God!!!** Those who say that it "contains" the words of God have said this so that they can omit the portions of the Scriptures that they do not like. Whenever a person states that there are portions of the Bible that are not God's Word, they have proverbially opened Pandora's Box. We must ask, "*Where do you draw the line and who decides what portions are inspired and which portions are not?*" Several years ago one man decided that only sixty-eight verses in the Bible were inspired. He took out everything that he didn't like. We can't do that! It's all God's Word. It does not "contain" the word of God—it is the word of God!!!

◆ **The Bible is authoritative**

The prophet Isaiah said, "*Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken...*" (*Isaiah 1:2*). When God speaks everybody must listen because His is the final authority.

◆ **The Bible is sufficient**

The Bible is sufficient for a number of things:

- Salvation

Paul said to Timothy, "*And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*" (*II Timothy 3:15*). The Bible is sufficient to help one understand how to be saved (*Romans 10:17; Ephesians 1:13*). There is nothing more important in the entire world than knowing how to enter into a

personal and eternal relationship with Almighty God and to be forgiven of one's sins and the Bible reveals how we can have that kind of relationship.

- Maturity

We are to study the Scriptures for our own spiritual growth. Peter said, *"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (I Peter 2:2)*. The word of God is spiritual food that enables a believer to grow to maturity in Christ. John described three stages of spiritual growth: little children, young men, and fathers (*I John 2:13,14*). He described the young men as being strong because the word of God lived in them (*I John 2:14*). Paul said that a mature believer knew enough of the word of God that he was not deceived by false doctrine and enticed by false religions (*Ephesians 4:14*).

Paul reprimanded the Corinthian church because they had not matured in their Christian life (*I Corinthians 3:1,2*). The writer of the book of Hebrews reprimanded the Hebrew Christians because they ought to be teachers of the word of God and yet he had to go back and teach them the ABC's of the faith:

Hebrews 5:11-14: *"We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. ¹² In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil."*

If a Christian does not feed his soul on the word of God, he will never mature as a believer (*Acts 20:32; I John 2:14*). **As food is to the body, so the word of God is to the soul** (*Matthew 4:4*). Some Christians are starving spiritually because they are not taking in nourishment. We must not read about the Bible, we must read the Bible. These are the words of life. These are the words that are living and powerful (*Hebrews 4:12*).

As a matter of fact, Paul said that the Scriptures were complete so that the man of God did not need anything else to grow to maturity in his Christian life: *"...so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:17)*. The Apostle Paul also said that the word of God, *"...is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness..." (II Timothy 3:16)*.

Paul said that the word of God is profitable for teaching. **Teaching shows us the path on which we should walk** based upon what God's Word says on a particular subject. He also said that the word of God is profitable for **rebuking**. This **shows us where we have gotten off the path**. Reproof exposes areas of our thinking or behavior that does not align with God's Word. Paul further said that the word of God is profitable for **correction**. This **shows us how to get back on the path**. Correction comes by confession of our sin and the forsaking of what is wrong. And finally, Paul said that the word of God is profitable for **training**. This **shows us how to stay on the path**. We must never forget that the Bible is a handbook for living and a textbook for life.

The Bible is all that a believer needs for direction in his Christian life (*II Peter 1:3*). Without God's Word, there is no way a believer can grow to maturity.

- Hope

The Bible says, *"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"* (*Romans 15:4*). The Bible is the source of endurance and encouragement giving us the hope in the here and now and ultimately forever (*II Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13,14*).

- Blessing

James, the Lord's brother, wrote, *"But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does"* (*James 1:25*). When a believer hears and obeys the word of God, his life will be blessed (*see Psalm 19:8; Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 11:28; James 1:21; I John 1:4; Revelation 1:3*). If your heart is committed to obeying the word of God, then God will fill your life with joy.

◆ **The Bible is effective**

God said, *"So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it"* (*Isaiah 55:11*). God's Word will accomplish the will of God. The reason that God's Word is effective is because it is alive and powerful:

Hebrews 4:12: *"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to*

dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Paul also said that the word of God was powerful:

I Thessalonians 1:5: *"Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction."*

Romans 1:16: *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."*

When you hear the word of God, it isn't just ordinary words being spoken. When the word of God is shared, it is empowered by God's Holy Spirit and will accomplish God's purposes.

◆ **The Bible is determinative**

When we say that the Bible is determinative, we mean that your response to the word of God will determine the course of your life and your eternal destiny. Jesus said, *"He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God"* (John 8:47). In other words, the determination of whether an individual is saved or not is based upon whether he listens and obeys the word of God. The Apostle Paul said:

I Corinthians 2:9-14: *"However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" — ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

There are two kinds of people: those who receive the things of God and those who do not. Unbelievers cannot receive God's Word because they do not have the Holy Spirit (*Romans 8:9; Jude 1:19*). The people who receive the word of God indicate by their understanding of it that they possess the Holy Spirit (*I John 2:27*).

◆ **The Bible is true**

Many times in both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible clearly states that its words are true. Daniel called the Old Testament a book of Truth, "But first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth..." (*Daniel 10:21*). Jesus prayed to the Father and said, "...your word is truth" (*John 17:17*). The Psalmist said, "Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them" (*Psalms 119:140*). The Apostle Paul also said, "I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie" (*Galatians 1:20; see also Romans 9:1; I Timothy 2:7; II Corinthians 11:10,31*). Both Paul and James called the Scriptures the "word of truth" (*II Timothy 2:15; James 1:18*). The Bible is true and you can base your life and eternal destiny upon its precepts!

◆ **The Bible is eternal**

The Scriptures were not written for this life only but they are eternal. Because the Author of the book is eternal, so are His words. Several times the New Testament teaches us clearly that God's Word will never pass away:

Matthew 24:35: "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*"

I Peter 1:23,25: "*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever."*

Isaiah 40:8: "*The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.*"

Psalms 119:89: "*Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*"

The word of God is no ordinary book. It is a living book and reveals to us the mind of God. Its power can transform the lives of all who study it and obey it.

Because the Scriptures are the very words of God, they are profitable for Christian living. The Psalmist loved the word of God. In Psalm 119, he said that he hid "...your word in my heart" (verse 11), he meditated on it "all day long" (verse 97), he declared it to be "sweeter than honey to my mouth" (verse 103), and that it was a "lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (verse 105).

In order for a believer to defeat sin in his life, he must know and apply the word of God (Psalm 119:9,11). Paul said, "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground...Take the...sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:13,17). The armor of God is our protection against Satan's attack. Every piece of the armor is a defensive weapon except the sword of the Spirit (the word of God). The word of God is an offensive weapon by which we can defend ourselves against the attacks of the devil.

CONCLUSION

In light of what we have said about God's Word, what should our response be? We suggest that you:

◆ BELIEVE IT

When some of those who had been following Jesus walked away, Jesus asked the disciples if they would leave Him too. Peter responded to the Lord's question on behalf of the disciple band, "...Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). The words of Jesus are words of truth and life that must be believed.

◆ HONOR IT

Job said, "...I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread" (Job 23:12b). The Psalmist said, "...for you have exalted above all things your name and your word" (Psalm 138:2). God honors His Word even above His name. We should honor His Word too!

◆ LOVE IT

The Psalmist cried out, "O how I love your law!" (Psalm 119:97) When speaking of the statutes of the Lord, David wrote, "They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb" (Psalm 19:10). We should love the word of God too!

◆ OBEY IT

The Apostle John penned these words, *"But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him..."* (I John 2:5). As God's children we should obey the commandments of the word of God. We honor it best by obeying it.

◆ FIGHT FOR IT

Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, said, *"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints"* (Jude 1:3). We as Christians should defend the word of God against all critics.

◆ PREACH IT

In II Timothy 4:2, Paul simply said, *"Preach the word..."* We are commanded to preach the word of God because when it is preached men's lives will be changed (I Corinthians 1:18,21; Romans 10:17).

◆ STUDY IT

Paul told the young preacher Timothy, *"Study to show thyself approved unto God..."* (II Timothy 2:15—KJV). We must study the Bible to know the Bible.

In his booklet *Reading the Bible*, Welch pastor Geoffrey Thomas said:

Do not expect to master the Bible in a day, or a month, or a year. Rather expect often to be puzzled by its contents. It is not all equally clear. Great men of God often feel like absolute novices when they read the Word. The Apostle Peter said that there were some things hard to understand in the epistles of Paul (II Peter 3:16). I am glad he wrote those words because I have felt that often. So do not expect always to get an emotional charge or a feeling of quiet peace when you read the Bible. By the grace of God, you may expect that to be a frequent experience, but often you will get no emotional response at all. Let the Word break over your heart and mind again and again as the years go by, and imperceptibly there will come great changes in your attitude and outlook and conduct. You will probably be the last to recognize these. Often you will feel very, very small, because increasingly the God of the Bible

will become to you wonderfully great. So go on reading it until you can read no longer, and then you will not need the Bible any more, because when your eyes close for the last time in death, and never again read the Word of God in Scripture, you will open them to the Word of God in the flesh, that same Jesus of the Bible whom you have known for so long, standing before you to take you forever to His eternal home.

Before man ever set foot here on earth, God's Word was settled forever in heaven (*Psalm 119:89*). God gave the Bible to us and preserved it so that we can fully trust every word (*Psalm 12:6,7*). Jesus clearly taught that the word of God would outlast heaven and earth (*Matthew 24:35*). **The word of God is not the book of the month—it's the book of the ages!**

The Bible is the message from God to man. **The Scriptures are not a handbook on all there is to know about God or religion.** The Scriptures do not profess to be a complete body of knowledge. The Apostle John told us that the world could not contain the volumes that could be written about the earthly life of Jesus (*John 21:25*) much less tell all that could be said about an infinite and eternal God! The intention of Scripture is to supply man with the knowledge of salvation (*II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 1:3*) and what is necessary to live a godly Christian life (*II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:3*). Only what is in some way related to these two themes is discussed in Scripture. Much that our speculative appetite would desire is not there but we do have all we need to know.

The Scriptures make known to us the character and will of God and His eternal purpose to love mankind. The Bible is our only perfect and authoritative rule of life and conduct. It is the standard of the highest moral teaching. It is the greatest source of comfort to sorrowing hearts imparting new faith, peace, and hope. The Bible is the only source of truth concerning the future of humanity and life beyond the grave. Read the Bible carefully, frequently, and prayerfully.

In this message, I have tried to demonstrate that everything that we can investigate about the word of God we find to be correct. Since everything we checked out is right, it would be logical too assume that the rest of the Bible is correct also. In a court of law, the jury is instructed to ask themselves, "*What does the preponderance of the evidence show to be true?*" That is the question that I want you to ask yourselves this morning. When deciding on whether the Bible is the word of God or not—ask yourself, "*What does the preponderance of the evidence show to be true?*" I'm convinced that if you are fair and honest that you must come to the conclusion that the Bible **REALLY** is the word of God!

The Bible is not man's opinion, it is not human philosophy, it is not the pooling of the best thoughts of a few wise men—it is the word of God! We conclude with the words of God:

Isaiah 66:2: *"Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."*

Remember the reasons why we believe the Bible to be the word of God:

- I. REASON DEMANDS IT
- II. HISTORY VERIFIES IT
- III. SCIENCE AND ARCHAEOLOGY SUPPORT IT
- IV. PROPHECY PROVES IT
- V. CHRIST CONFIRMED IT
- VI. THE BIBLE CLAIMS IT

IS THE BIBLE REALLY THE WORD OF GOD?

*The outline for this message was adapted from a chapter entitled, *"Is The Bible the Word of God?"* from the book [Christianity for Skeptics](#) by Steve Kumar.

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